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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 003565

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAQ](#) [RELATIONS](#)

SUBJECT: FM EXPRESSES CONTINUED CONCERN OVER KUWAIT-IRAQ
BORDER, REQUESTS SATELLITE IMAGERY

REF: A. KUWAIT 3523

[B](#). KUWAIT 3446

[C](#). KUWAIT 3396

[D](#). KUWAIT 3331 (NOTAL)

[E](#). KUWAIT 3287 (NOTAL)

[F](#). 04 KUWAIT 4426

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Contrary to recent local press reports declaring the border issue with Iraq "finalized" (ref A), Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Salem Al-Sabah was privately more pessimistic in a meeting with the Ambassador August 9. While he was glad "the ITG chose the proper channels" to solve the dispute, the FM was skeptical that the border issue was fully resolved given ongoing problems in Iraq. The FM expressed concern that Iraqi PM Ibrahim Al-Jaafari's successors would not react as diplomatically to a future border crisis. FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed admitted that the head of an Iraqi "fact finding" delegation, Khaled Al-Attiya, said "all the right things" during his visit to Kuwait, but he questioned whether Al-Attiya's views were representative or authoritative. Emphasizing the need for greater UN involvement, the FM said the UN had responded positively to a GOK request for a UN team to maintain the border as stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 833 (well before the recent events). He asked for the U.S. to expedite a UN request for updated satellite imagery of the border, as promised by Deputy Secretary of Defense England when he met with the FM in Washington in May. End summary.

Doubts Border Issue Resolved

[1](#)2. (C) Despite Kuwaiti press reports heralding a "New chapter in relations between Iraq and Kuwait," the FM doubted that the border issue was completely resolved given ongoing problems in Iraq. While praising PM Al-Jaafari's handling of the border issue, FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed was concerned that his successors may not react the same way. The FM found recent statements by some Iraqi MPs to be "worrisome," adding that elements of Iraqi society want to "take us back to square one." He commented that denying the validity of UNSCR 833 "flies against everything we - Kuwait and the U.S. - have worked for." He continued, "This is not the new Iraq we hoped for. This isn't even the old Iraq; it is an uglier version."

[1](#)3. (C) The FM said he was "surprised" by Iraqi ignorance about the border, which was clearly demarcated by UNSCR 833. An Iraqi "fact finding" delegation in Kuwait to discuss the border seemed surprised that pillars along the border were not moved by Kuwait, he commented. After a visit to the border, the delegation concluded that the barrier being installed by Kuwait was on Kuwaiti territory, and that Kuwait was not trying to "grab" Iraqi land or steal Iraqi oil. Kuwait must do more to educate Iraqis about the border, the FM said.

[1](#)4. (C) Asked by the Ambassador about the optimistic comments of Khaled Al-Attiya, FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed admitted he said "all the right things" during the Iraqi delegation's trip, but pointed out that Al-Attiya was a "lightweight" who did not represent any Iraqi political party. "He speaks for himself," the FM said, doubting that Al-Attiya's views were necessarily representative of all Iraqi political parties and factions. The Iraqi delegation left Kuwait August 9 after spending six days in the country.

[1](#)5. (C) FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed told the Ambassador that he raised his concerns with Al-Jaafari, who understood the GOK's position and was committed to resolving the issue peacefully. The FM hoped for an apology from the Iraqi MPs responsible for recent inflammatory statements, but they have shown no remorse, he said. "This is a very serious issue," the FM remarked. FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed expressed concern that future Iraqi leaders might not handle another border crisis as diplomatically as PM Al-Jaafari.

UN Team Requested

16. (C) FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed emphasized the importance of a UN role along the border. He reminded the Ambassador that Kuwait had some time ago requested a UN team to maintain the borders (ref F), as provided for under UNSCR 833. The UN responded "positively" to the Kuwaiti request and formed a preliminary team, he reported. According to the FM, the GOK has already paid its share of the UN team's financial costs and is now waiting for the ITG to pay. The Iraqis need to see UN blue helmets or technical expert equivalents along the border to demonstrate that Kuwait is not encroaching on Iraqi territory, the FM argued.

Request for Satellite Imagery

17. (C) The FM requested that the U.S. expedite its response to the UN request for updated satellite imagery of the border. FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed said he raised the issue with the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Secretary Rice during his May trip to Washington. U.S. assistance was vital for the UN team to do its job, he emphasized. (Note: Embassy is working this issue with OMC-K and requests an expedited CENTCOM response. End note.)

Acting NA Speaker Expresses Similar Concerns

18. (C) Acting National Assembly Speaker Mohammed Jassem Al-Sager echoed the FM's concerns in a separate meeting with the Ambassador August 9. The border was going to continue to be a problem, Al-Sager said. He blamed the GOK for not doing more to educate the Iraqi people about the border after the fall of Saddam Hussein. He also criticized Kuwaiti media and some MPs (ref A) for inflaming the issue claiming their "irresponsible" criticisms of Iraq hurt Kuwaiti-Iraqi bilateral relations.

19. (U) Basrah minimize considered.

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